

Message Text

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42

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

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CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0302

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, MA, US

SUBJECT: U.S. POLITICAL STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS MADAGASCAR

LIMDIS

REF: TANANARIVE 0301

BEGIN SUMMARY: U.S. INTERESTS WILL BE AT STAKE IN ANTICIPATED INFLUENCE AND PERHAPS POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN MALAGASY MILITARY DIRECTORY. IF WE PREPARED SUPPORT CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN DIRECTORY WITH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY CREDIT ASSISTANCE, WE SHOULD BE ABLE BRING MADAGASCAR CLOSER TO U.S. POSITION KHMER AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE REPRESENTATION ISSUES AND PERHAPS ALSO ON INDICAN OCEAN MATTERS. IF WE DO NOT SUPPORT CONSERVATIVES, AND RADICALS GAIN UPPER HAND IN DIRECTORY, WE EVEN RISK LOSS OF NASA STATION. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES U.S. COULD SUBSTANTIALY FURTHER ITS INTERESTS BY SUPPORTING CONSERVATIVE SIDE IN ANTICIPATED INFLUENCE AND PERHAPS POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN MALAGASY
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MILITARY DIRECTORY. IF WE PLAY OUR CARDS RIGHT, WE

SHOULD BE ABLE WIN AWAY VOTE FROM OTHER SIDE ON KHMER AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE REPRESENTATION ISSUES, AT LEAST TO POSITION OF ABSTENTION AND POSSIBLY EVEN OF SUPPORT. WE MAY ALSO BE ABLE UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES TO BRING MADAGASCAR TO BETTER POSITION ON INDIAN OCEAN ISSUES, SUCH AS RESUMPTION OF NAVAL SHIP VISITS IF U.S. SO DESIRES. ON OTHER HAND, IF WE NOT PREPARED ACTIVELY BACK CONSERVATIVES IN INFLUENCE STRUGGLE, WE SHALL NOT ONLY FORFEIT ABOVE POSSIBILITIES, BUT RISK LOSS OF NASA STATION AS WELL, SHOULD RADICALS EMERGE WITH UPPER HAND BECAUSE OF OUR INACTION.

2. WE KNOW FROM OUR TALKS OVER PAST YEAR WITH GENERAL ANDRIAMAHAZO, CHAIRMAN OF MILITARY DIRECTORY, THAT HE HAS BEEN DEEPLY DISTURBED BY RADICAL FOREIGN POLICY TRENDS OF MADAGASCAR UNDER LEADERSHIP OF COMMANDER RATSIRAKA AS FOREIGN MINISTER IN RAMANANTSOA GOVERNMENT. WE BELIEVE THAT, EQUIPPED WITH PROPER SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE, ANDRIAMAHAZO WILL BE PREPARED BATTLE WITHIN DIRECTORY TO BRING HALT TO THESE RADICAL TRENDS.

3. BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT ANDRIAMAHAZO HAS NO PERSONAL POLITICAL AMBITIONS, AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO RETIRE QUIETLY TO HIS PROPERTY OUTSIDE TANANARIVE. IF OUTSIDE SUPPORT DOES NOT DEVELOP FOR HIS MORE CONSERVATIVE, PRO-WEST POSITION, THEN HE MAY DECIDE TO THROW IN TOWEL, AND RETIRE AT TIME WHEN HIS PRESTIGE WITHIN MADAGASCAR HAS NEVER BEEN HIGHER THAN AFTER PUTTING DOWN LAST WEEK'S REBELLION WITH MINIMUM OF BLOODSHED AND WITHOUT GENERATING OPEN COTIER VS. MERINA VIOLENCE.

4. IN THIS CONTEXT EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPT PROMPTLY AUTHORIZE EMBASSY TO:

(A) OFFER GOMR 20,000 TONS OF RICE UNDER TITLE I, PL 480, PURSUANT TO EARLIER GOMR REQUEST.

(B) INDICATE THAT U.S. HOPES BE ABLE HAVE A.I.D. JOIN WITH IBRD IN FINANCING ACCEPTABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

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(C) STATE THAT U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED UNDER APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF UP TO \$3 MILLION IN MILITARY CREDIT ASSISTANCE.

5. IN VIEW OF DISRUPTIONS SUFFERED BY ECONOMY, PARTICULARLY IN TANANARIVE AREA, AS RESULT OF LAST WEEK'. REBELLION, THERE NOW EXIST HUMANITARIAN AS WELL AS POLITICAL REASONS

FOR MEETING PART OF GOMR'S REQUEST FOR PL 480 ASSISTANCE. EMBASSY WOULD STILL BE PREPARED, AS IT HAS SUGGESTED IN PAST, TO TIE PL 480 RESPONSE TO MORE FAVORABLE MALAGASY STANCE ON SUCH ISSUES AS KHMER AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE REPRESENTATION.

6. PROPOSAL IN PARA 4 WITH RESPECT TO A.I.D. ASSISTANCE TO AGRICULTURAL PROJECT WOULD SIMPLY REPRESENT CONVEYING TO NEW GOMR WHAT WAS GENERALLY AGREED TO DURING MY WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS LAST DECEMBER.

7. MILITARY CREDIT ASSISTANCE PROPOSAL WOULD BE PUT FORTH IN CONTEXT OF RESUMPTION OF AUTHORIZATION OF U.S. NAVAL SHIP VISITS IF DEPT SO DESIRED. GIVEN GOMR NEED TO REPLACE LOSSES, PARTICULARLY OF AMMUNITION, DURING LAST WEEK'S FIGHTING, MALAGASY INTEREST IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE AT ACME RIGHT NOW, THUS GIVING US MAXIMUM LEVERAGE ON SHIP VISITS. IF WE NOT PREPARED COME FORTH IN THIS FIELD, THEY MAY WELL FEEL IMPELLED TO TURN TOWARD EAST TO MEET THEIR MILITARY NEEDS.

8. REQUEST EARLY DEPT GUIDANCE.
MENDENHALL

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